

17. (Amended) An electroactive device providing large mechanical output displacements, comprising:

E 1 a layered structure having a prestressing layer having a convex surface, and a piezoelectric layer having a concave surface, the convex surface of the prestressing layer being bonded onto the concave surface of the piezoelectric layer such that the prestressing layer is in tension and imparts a prestress on the piezoelectric layer such that the piezoelectric layer is in compression, wherein the prestressing layer and the piezoelectric layer are distinct from one another.

REMARKS

Claims 17-24 have been finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Corwin in view of Haertling or vice versa. Claim 17 has been amended for greater clarification of the invention and to put the claims in better condition for appeal.

(1) The Examiner argues that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that the prestress layer could be attached to either the concave or convex side of the piezoelectric element.

(2) The Examiner further argues that making parts integral or separable (referring to the prestress and piezoelectric elements) has long been held to be within the skill expected of the routineer. The Examiner further argues that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that Haertling could be provided as two separate, bonded, layers, as Corwin explicitly teaches providing a prestress layer as a separate element and Haertling teaches that a separate layer device was known before the monolithic structure was preferred.

Applicants respectfully reiterate their assertion that the present invention is nonobvious over Corwin in view of Haertling or vice versa.